



CITY OF CHICOPEE

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS



Stanley W. Kulig, P.E.
Superintendent

Thomas Hamel
Chief Operator

Sewer Commission Meeting
February 24, 2010

Present: Sewer Commissioners: Fred Goehring, Chairman
Carl Roy, Vice-Chairman
Gerald Fecteau
Chung Liu
Joseph Carriveau

Also Present: Thomas Hamel, Chief Operator, WPC
Paul Perron of 335 New Ludlow Road

Mr. Perron is here tonight to request an additional abatement for a large usage due to a leaking faucet in his home. Mr. Perron was granted an abatement on his sewer bill at the January 20, 2010 Sewer Commission Meeting in the amount of \$116.75. Tom Hamel explained to Mr. Perron that because he didn't provide the Sewer Commission documentation, the Sewer Commission looked at his usage history and took an average from the same periods in question and then all of the periods in question. If it is found that he is over his average usage, the Sewer Commission will then take those figures and split them in half and the abatement will be given for half the amount that was found to be higher than average. Tom Hamel also explained to Mr. Perron that this is the same averaging technique that the Commissioners use in these types of situations. The Commission voted not to provide an additional abatement.

Mr. Carriveau motioned to accept the minutes of November 4, 2009, seconded by Mr. Roy, accepted 5-0.

Mr. Carriveau motioned to accept the minutes of November 23, 2009, seconded by Mr. Lui, accepted 5-0.

Commitments:

February 2010 - Sewer & Storm - \$808,274.90, Mr. Roy motioned to accept, seconded by Mr. Carriveau, approved 5-0.

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Water Pollution Control

Tom informed the Commissioners that the office staff had been questioned a couple of times as to why the Sewer Commission Meeting notice does not appear in the paper. After some research with The Republican newspaper, Kim Billips spoke with Pam Metaxas of the Republican and was told that the editors select which meetings will be posted in the week's agenda section of Monday's newspaper. Because of limited space, not all meeting notices can be posted in the newspaper, however, Pam said that all meetings are posted on MassLive.com.

Tom informed the Commissioners that the Odor Control Calendars for 2010 have been sent out to the neighbors of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The calendars allow residents around the Treatment Plant to record the date and strength of the odor coming from the plant and then send them into the office for Tom Hamel's review.

Next, Tom Hamel explained to the Commissioners that in March of 2008 the Mayor and the Board of Alderman agreed to involve the City of Chicopee in the Water and Wastewater Agency Response Network (WARN). WARN is a network of cities and towns that agree to help each other in emergency situations where they may be in need of personnel, supplies and equipment. Recently, it was brought to Tom Hamel's attention that the City of Chicopee was not listed as a participant of WARN since Tom Hamel did not realize a contract needed to be signed. Tom Hamel informed the Commissioners that he was sending a letter to the Mayor explaining what had happened and asking that he sign the agreement allowing the City of Chicopee to participate in the WARN program. Tom Hamel then asked Mr. Goehring if he would sign three original authorizations.

Tom then explained to the Commissioners that there are about 22 Pump Stations which have an alarm system that is connected to a SCADA system by telephone which collects and processes data which then forwards the information to the Treatment Plant Operators. Tom informed the Commissioners that a flaw in our system in October of 2009 was found. Tom Hamel met with Mass DEP and agreed to replace the system within 12 months. Unfortunately there are no repairs or replacement parts for this system anymore and it needs to be completely redone. In order to put in a new SCADA system similar to the one we have now, it would cost between \$200,000 and \$300,000. Tom explained that a lot of cities have gone to a web based system where you pay \$1,000-\$2,000 per Pump Station for a computer package and it would hook up to the existing wiring. The alarm would be sent via a cell phone, which the company pays for, to the company's central station and then forwarded to us. We would be able to get rid of our monthly Verizon phone bills at each of the pump stations and we would then pay a monthly charge to the company which we would have to bid, but the average charge is about \$24-\$30 per month. The monthly charge is to cover the phone call/service/alarms that we put in our stations. Tom Hamel is concerned about spending this much money for only a three year contract which is by law the longest contract you can have. He did inform the Commissioner that if all City Councilors voted and agreed, they could make it a five year contract. Mr. Lui and Mr. Roy expressed their concern in the fact that if the Company fails to notify the City of Chicopee of an alarm, possibly because the website went down, and we have an overflow, will the Company claim responsibility and pay any fines owed. Tom Hamel assured the Commissioners that he would look at their concerns and see if they could be written into the bid specs. Tom explained that right now we have had problems with the system because the telephone line goes down, but he also said that we have never been fined for failure due to a telephone line being down.

Mr. Carriveau motioned to request that a five year contract be written into the bid specifications of the new SCADA system for the Pump Stations, seconded by Mr. Roy, approved to forward this request to the Mayor and City Council 5-0.

Sewer and Storm Fee Revenues to date total \$ 5,389,504 and Tom Hamel said that is about \$76,000 less than projected.

Abatements:

Michael & Tina Russo – 32 Pendleton Avenue – Hot Water Tank Broke -\$60.00, Mr. Carriveau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Lui approved 5-0.

Ridgewood Village – Mitchell Drive – Double Billed - \$433.44, Mr. Carriveau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Lui approved 5-0.

Edward & Lorette Trznadel – 112 Leo Drive – Incorrect Billing - \$620.00, Mr. Carriveau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Lui approved 5-0.

Chicopee Housing Authority – 41-49 Benoit Circle – Interest Charge Paid Never Received Original Bill - \$64.79, Mr. Fecteau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Lui approved 5-0.

Chicopee Housing Authority – 335-339 East Main Street – Interest Charge Paid Never Received Original Bill - \$96.26, Mr. Fecteau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Lui approved 5-0.

Chicopee Housing Authority – 165 East Main Street – Interest Charge Paid Never Received Original Bill - \$156.92, Mr. Fecteau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Lui approved 5-0.

Jeffrey Lauziere – 30 Ridgewood Road – Stuck Meter - \$300.88, Mr. Carriveau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Lui approved 5-0.

Thomas & Vanessa Lauziere – 664 Montgomery Street – New Pool Liner - \$75.00, Mr. Carriveau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Roy approved 5-0.

Kenneth Crochiere – 85 Ludlow Road – New Pool Liner - \$100.00, Mr. Carriveau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Roy approved 5-0.

AHH Inc. – 10 David Street – Estimated Reading - \$11.32, Mr. Carriveau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Fecteau approved 5-0.

Mieczyslaw & Helen Nowak – 27 Old Chicopee Street – Estimated Reading - \$4.23, Mr. Carriveau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Fecteau approved 5-0.

B&B Real Estate – 26 Munger Road - Estimated Reading - \$176.13, Mr. Carriveau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Fecteau approved 5-0.

Shawn St. George – 23 Dawn Street – Billing Error - \$1,787.73, Mr. Fecteau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Carriveau approved 5-0.

Edward & Barbara Pronovost – 164 McCarthy Avenue – Billing Error - \$2,646.00, Mr. Fecteau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Carriveau approved 5-0.

Doris Morin – 378 Dale Street – Billing Error - \$270.83, Mr. Fecteau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Carriveau approved 5-0.

Dorothy Pirog – 405 Chicopee Street – Misread Meter - \$74.56, Mr. Fecteau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Carriveau approved 5-0.

Adam Lamontagne – 60 Lawndale Street – Misread Meter - \$420.00, Mr. Fecteau motioned to approve the abatement, seconded by Mr. Carriveau approved 5-0.

Next, The Commissioners discussed the Sewer Rate increase to match the Fiscal Year 2011 budget. Tom Hamel explained that the Sewer Commission had approved bonding for sewer separation projects at \$39 million and they authorized the FY'11 budget that has first year bonding of \$22,876,874 for the Upper Granby Road, Chicopee Falls A and McKinstry Avenue sewer separation projects. Tom also explained that we are receiving stimulus money at 1.72% which is a loan forgiveness of \$2,681,306.00, so we have to finance \$20,195,568. The finance amount calculates out to \$950,000 in loan payments per year. Tom then explained that the design is not finished yet, but that they are expecting to have to finance another \$18 million for Fiscal Year 2012 which would put the total amount to be finance around \$38 million. So in order to make the loan payments, the sewer rates need to be increased. If the Commissioners want to keep the two-tier rates, then the increase for FY'11 would be \$4.00/100 cubic feet for the first 1000 cubic feet and anything over 1000 cubic feet would be at the rate of \$4.75/100 cubic feet. In FY'12 the rates would increase again to \$4.45/100 cubic feet for the first 1000 cubic feet and \$5.25/100 cubic feet over 1000 cubic feet. According to Tom Hamel's calculations, if the rates were increased to what he proposes for FY'11, it would generate \$10,171,000 and the proposed FY'11 budget totals \$10,161,000.

If the Sewer Commissioners wanted to change the Sewer Rate to a one-tier rate, the rate would be \$4.50/100 cubic feet for every resident and it would generate \$10,175,000 for FY'11. FY'12 the rate would increase to \$4.99/100 cubic feet for every resident.

Mr. Roy motioned to keep the Sewer Rates on a two-tier structure and to increase the rates for FY'11 to \$4.00/100 cubic feet for the first 1000 cubic feet and \$4.75/100 cubic feet over 1000 cubic feet, and the rates for FY'12 would increase to \$4.45/100 cubic feet for the first 1000 cubic feet and \$5.25/100 cubic feet over 1000 cubic feet., seconded by Mr. Fecteau, forwarded to the City Council for approval 5-0.

Tom Hamel then informed the Commissioners that he had prepared a letter to the City Council on their behalf requesting the City Council to approve the rate increases over the next two fiscal years. Tom explained that increasing the Sewer Rates for FY'11 and FY'12 is in align with the bonding schedule for the Upper Granby Road, Chicopee Falls Phase A & B and McKinstry Avenue/Lorraine Street Sewer Separation Projects and also establishes planning of future costs for the home owners and business communities. The EPA Storm Fee will stay in effect as it has since being established in 2006.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 7, 2010 at 5:30p.m.

Mr. Roy motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:53p.m., seconded by Mr. Lui, adjourned 5-0.

*Accepted
3-0
4/28/10*

Copies: Mayor
City Council
City Clerk
Stanley Kulig